CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT

DRAFT NEGATIVE DECLARATION

Project Title: **Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) Removal Action Work Plan at former Camp Ibis at Needles, San Bernardino County, California**

State Clearinghouse Number:

Contact Person and Telephone #:

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Project Location (include County):

The former Camp Ibis (Camp) is located in San Bernardino County, approximately 21 miles northwest of Needles, California. The Camp is situated between the Homer Mountains on the west and the Dead Mountains on the east. U.S. Highway 95 passes through the western side of the Camp. The Camp is located within T10N, R20E, Section 13c; T10N, R21E, Sections 4-9, 16-19, 21; T11N, R20E, Sections 20, 21, 28, 29, 32, 33.

Project Description:

The United States Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) proposes to conduct an engineering evaluation and cost analysis/interim removal action (EE/CA/IRA) to reduce potential risks and hazard to human health and the environment at Camp Ibis, a Formerly Used Defense Site. The Camp Ibis training facility was used to train troops for desert warfare and for combat troops, to train service units and staff, to test equipment, ammunition, weapon systems and supplies. Munitions used at the site include 105 mm howitzers, 40 mm, 75 mm, 90 mm, 105 mm, and 155 mm projectiles.

The proposed EE/CA/IRA includes site characterization, identification of potential safety problems associated with the unexploded ordnance (UXO), risk management evaluation, UXO detonation if necessary, and evaluation and selection of alternatives for the site. Site characterization efforts involve a geophysical survey and intrusive sampling to assess the Camp's UXO density and contamination. The total area identified for the engineering evaluation & cost analysis/interim removal action is 100 acres distributed over 13,398 acres of the former Camp. The overall investigation and removal activities of potentially contaminated soil will take approximately 15 weeks at Camp Ibis.

The EE/CA/IRA will be conducted in accordance with the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act and the National Oil and Hazardous Substances Pollution Contingency Plan, 40 Code of Federal Regulations 300.410/300.415. The proposed investigation is subject to the requirements of the California Health and Safety Code, Chapter 6.8.

A UXO-Technician will provide visual clearance and UXO avoidance as well as assist in the geophysical survey operations. Vegetation will not be cleared across the site and every effort will be made to preserve vegetation. Intrusive investigation of anomalies will require a soil excavation

of no more than 2 x 2 x 2 feet. Soil will be replaced and regraded. The ACOE estimates 40 anomalies per acre will need to be investigated.

During this investigation, UXO specialists expect to perform none to possibly 4 UXO detonations on the project site. If surface ordnance is encountered during the geophysical survey and determined to be unsafe, it may be moved to a consolidation area or detonated in-place. During demolition of UXO, sandbags will be used to mitigate the fragments in accordance with the Department of Defense Explosives Safety Board. No UXO will be left unattended at any time.

An exclusion zone will be established to protect the non-essential project personnel and the public from intentional and unintentional detonations. The Minimum Separation Distance (MSD) of 2577 feet is based on the most probable munition (a 155 mm projectile) for Areas A, B, and C. If sampling conditions or site data warrant the ACOE, Engineering and Support Center, Huntsville may reduce the approved MSD to a distance of 447 feet based on one hazardous fragment per 600 square feet. A reduction of the MSD to 220 feet may also be requested for implementation of engineering controls, such as sandbags.

A dedicated archaeologist and a biologist will accompany each of the geophysical field teams during the survey effort. The two specialists will provide the field teams with awareness training regarding identification of protected species (specifically the Desert Tortoise) and habitats as well as cultural resources. The specialists will recommend the change in transect paths and grid locations away from suspected sensitive areas including tortoise burrows, cryptogamic soil, and cultural resources. With approval of the Fish and Wildlife Service through the issuance of a Biological Opinion, a buffer distance (minimum 40 feet) for avoidance of suspect Desert Tortoise burrows will be maintained. Biologists will remove desert tortoises from above and below ground buffer zones before a detonation.

The Camp is traversed by several active roads, including Highway 95, and rail lines that may fall within the MSD required for public safety. For roadways intersecting the MSD, dedicated road guards with radios will be placed at a location sufficiently outside the MSD to alert the UXO team of vehicular traffic entry into the MSD, which will result in all intrusive activities stoppage. In addition, the intrusive activities will be focused to the off-peak traffic times to maximize production.

Findings of Significant Effect on Environment:

DTSC, as lead agency, has determined that the project will not have a significant effect on the environment as that term is defined in the Public Resources Code Section 21068. A copy of the Draft Special Initial Study that supports this finding is attached.

Mitigation Measures:
DTSC has determined that the project does not require any mitigation measures beyond those incorporated as part of the project description.

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DTSC Branch/ Unit Chief Signature John E. Scandura, Chief Southern California Branch Office of Military Facilities	**Title**	**Telephone #**	**Date**